National College of Arts Celebrates
125 years of Excellence 1875-2000

MINIATURE PAINTINGS FROM PAKISTAN

The Endowment Fund of the National College of Arts was set up in 1993 with a modest donation of One Thousand Rupees. The Prime Minister of Pakistan made a substantial contribution of Ten Million Rupees in January 1993 at the time of the Convocation of the College. The first Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund invested the funds most judiciously .

The Endowment Fund Deed was prepared by Dr. Pervez Hasan of Hasan & Hasan Associates and Mr. Anwar Kamal of Anwar Kamal Law Associates. The fund is subject to audit by independent auditors, appointed by the Trustees. A further contribution of Rupees Ten Million was made by the President of Pakistan in 1994.

A portion of the returns from the investments is used to support academic programs or special needs of the College such as long term hiring of teachers from abroad, cost of workshops and such other activities. Last funds were made available for the Art Galleries, development of the Library, support for the post-graduate courses and the NCA Students Scholarship Fund. **The College solicits support from all philanthropists and friends of the College. Contributions can be made by crossed cheques in the name of NCA Endowment Fund Trust.**

Trustees -1993	NCA thanks the Trustees of the **NCA- Endowment Fund Trust** For their generous support	**Trustees -2000**
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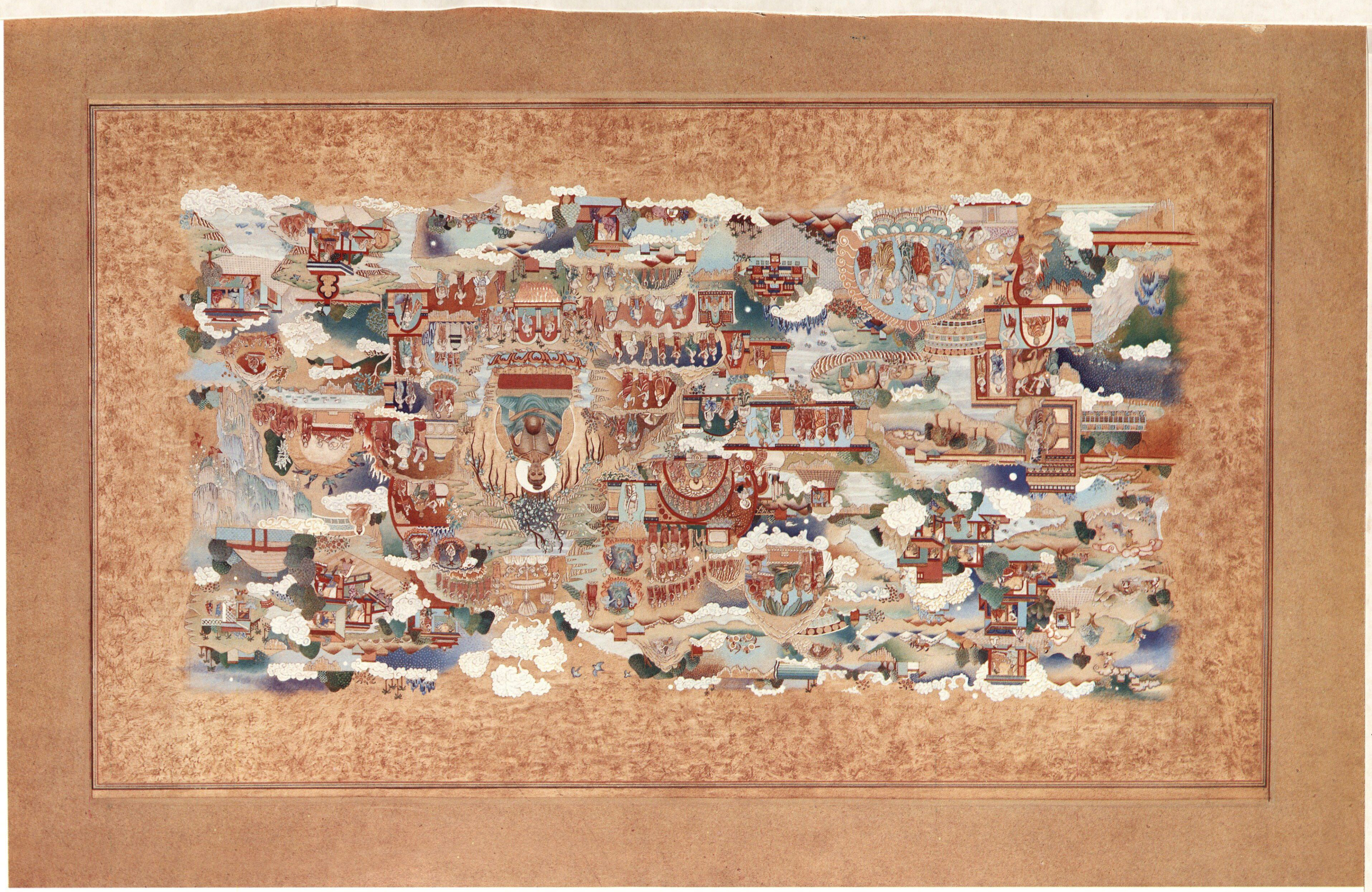
Miniature Painting Exhibition Incharge - Bashir Ahmed



Gul-e-Zahra 1993

Title : Buddha Size: 50.5 X 29.5 inches Artist's collection

Saira Saleem 1999 Title : Paradox Size: 22 X 20 inches Artist's collection

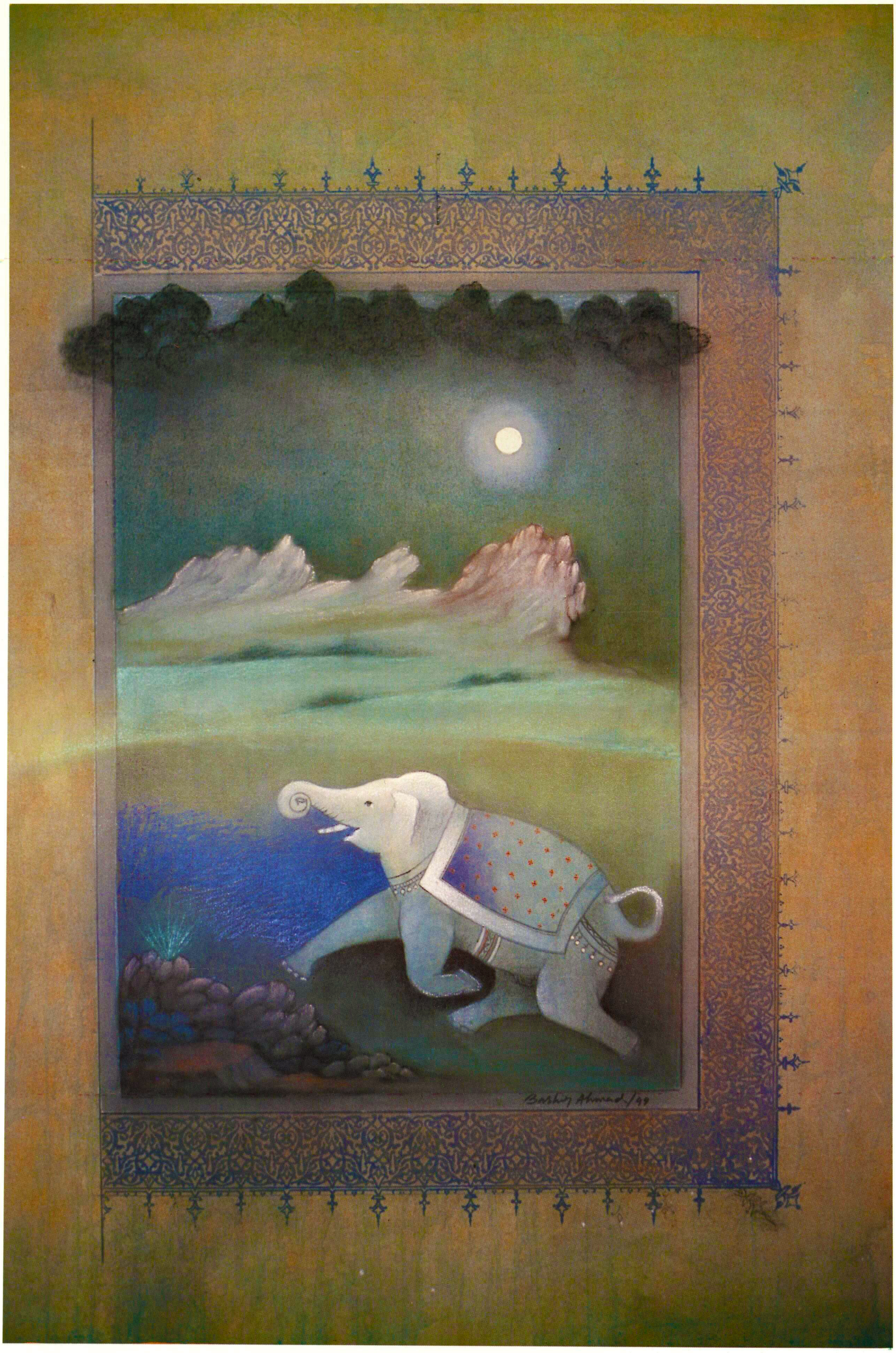
Nasheed Ansari 1992 Title : Parahan Size: 7.5 X 11.5 inches Artist's collection

Sheikh Shuja Ullah 1961

Title : Khilwat Size: 4.5 X 7 inches Private collection

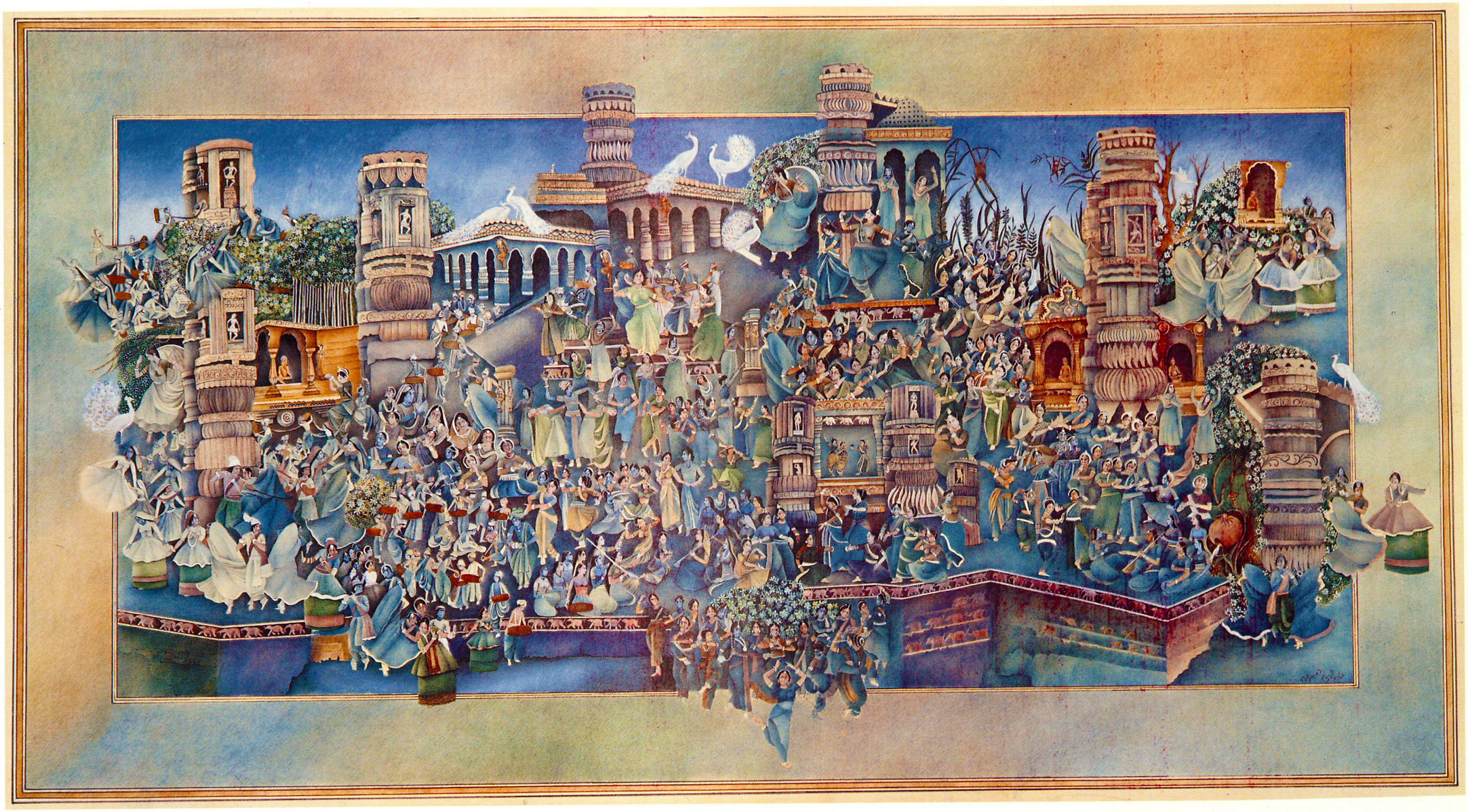
Nusra Latif 2000 Title : Lady in White Size: 7.5 X 11.5 inches Artist's collection

Usman Saeed 1998 Title : Bar Mazar-e-Ma Ghareeban Size: 11.5 X 16.5 inches Artist's collection



Bashir Ahmed 1999 Title : Elephant Size: 34 X 48 inches Artist's collection

Haji Muhammad Sharif 1965 Title : Farakh Seir Size: 8 X 10 inches NCA collection



Lubna Shafeeq 1992 Title : Rhthym Of Dance Size: 72 X 40 inches Artist's collection

Amina Khan 2000 Title : NCA Size: 10 X 15 inches Artist's collection

REVIVING ISLAMIC TRADITIONS

The British government of India in 1875, to revive and improve the crafts and industrial arts of the Punjab, established the Mayo School of Arts. According to archives at the National College of Arts (formerly the Mayo School) from 1901 to 1911 under the principalships of Percy Brown and Bhai Ram Singh, the Mayo School offered the following courses: lithography, modeling, perspective drawing, freehand in painting, freehand in brush, freehand from memory, sculpture, goldsmithing, sliversmithing, woodworking, drafting, needlework, and miniature painting. According to the NCA archives there is no documentation alluding to the existence of miniature painting until 1951. However it is a commonly known fact that Haji Mohammed Sharif was teaching at the institute from 1947 to 1968. Haji Sharif's successor, Sheikh Shujaullah continued as devotedly as his predecessor and remained at the NCA until his death in 1980.

I inaugurated my career as an apprentice to the late Sheikh Shujaullah in 1972 and am continuing to date. In my efforts to further enhance my successor and ustad's practices I revised the curriculum and teaching methodology of the miniature painting courses and got it established as a major. It was a challenging task to convert this traditional art into an academic syllabus. The task entailed numerous months devoted to collecting historical, visual, and philosophical data and designing exercises based on tradition, but which could be applied to contemporary themes. Progressively over the years I continue to fine tune the rough edges in lieu of the teaching methodology as problems arise with the increasing number of interested miniature students. In my efforts to enhance diversity, channeling students to pursue their line of forte in miniature art was and continues to remain a challenge. The class has to be attended to as a whole group, while simultaneously maintaining emphasis on individual attention. The evolution of the miniature painting program demanded exceedingly long hours and brought me face-to-face with the tribulations of innovation in an art form confined by several rules and form. This has evidently given a new life and unique facet to miniature art, resulting in a revolution of painting in Pakistan.

Students from around the globe convene together to study miniature painting at the NCA. Leading diplomats, prominent figures, established artists from other nations as well as academics continue to find common ground as they sit on the floor of the miniature studio that has revived the dying tradition of this Islamic art form introduced by the Persians to the mughal rulers of the Indo-subcontinent.

Other miniature artists are teaching miniature in a few establishments elsewhere. However, the miniature department of the NCA stands alone in its unique position, as it is gives precedence to traditional teaching that incorporates contemporary ideas. NCA takes immense pride in the fact that it remains the only institute in the world that offers a degree in this art form.

Since the inception of the degree program in 1982 fifteen groups of students have successfully completed their BFA (Hons.) degree. They are:

1982-83
1. Nahid Fakhruddin
2. Fatima Latif

1984-85
Mussarat Iqbal

1985-86
No Student

1986-87
1. Nasira Khanum
2. Ishtiaq Ahmed

1988-89
1. Uzma Qureshi
2. Fatima Zahra Hassan

1990-91
1. Shazia Sikandar
2. Taniat Majeed

1991-92
1. Ambreen Safdar
2. Moniba Noor-e-Sehr
3. Saniya Sajjad
4. Lubna Naeem
5. Nasheed Ansari

1992-93
1. Gul-e-Zehra
2. Fasih Ullah Ahsan
3. Bushra Hussain
4. Imran Qureshi
5. Shireen Bano
6. Rana Zehra
7. Marium Sajjad
8. Syeda Erum Kaukab

1993-94
1. Aminah Jehan Jamil
2. Shadia Zaheer
3. Nusra Latif Qureshi
4. Samra Ahmed
5. Anoosha Misbah
6. Talha Ashraf

1994-95
1. Tazeen Qayyum
2. Asma Naz
3. Aeysha Khalid
4. Adila Qureshi
5. Fyza Ammir Fayaz
6. Sumera Tazeen
7. Aisha Mubashir
8. Rabia Kanwal

1995-96
1. Sarwat Hayat
2. Shazia Anjum Zaidi
3. Amina Ali
4. Uzma Rabbani
5. Shahina Hanif
6. Amir Malik

1996-97
1. Ambreen S. Bokhari
2. Sehr Jalal
3. Zarina Wadood

1997-98
1. Usman Saeed
2. Sehr Savul
3. Mehr Savul
4. Erum Ayub Chugtai

1998-99
1. Saira Wasim
2. Saira Rafique
3. Mehrunissa Sethi
4. Sarah Yasin Minhas
5. Farah Mehmood
6. Abira Khan
7. Nadia Rahat
8. Sabeen Raja
9. Novin Zahid

1999-2000
1. Sadia Amin
2. Amna Khan
3. Sadia Farooq
4. Erum Afzal
5. Madiha Farooq
6. Sairah Khalid
7. Waseem Ahmad
8. Saima Rasheed
9. Sadaf Pervaiz
10. Samia Riaz
11. Maryam Khursheed
12. M. Abrahim
13. Ahsan Nadeem

Evidently, miniature painting has not only progressed in terms of innovative outcomes but it is an art form that has grown increasingly popular. The initial years were clearly a trial as class sizes didn't exceed over two students until 1991 but gradually more and more promising artists, enrolled at the NCA are selecting miniature art as a professional career.

The perception and visual manifestation of miniature painting emanating from the NCA has caught the attention of art connoisseurs all over Pakistan and overseas as well. As a responsibility to this department I continue to engage in ways of enhancing awareness of this endangered Islamic tradition of miniature art.

Bashir Ahmed
Head of the Section
Miniature Painting

125th Anniversary Celebrations Coordinator - Syed Maqsood Pasha
Exhibitions Coordinator - Dr. Ajaz Anwar
Miniature Painting Exhibition Incharge - Bashir Ahmed

Amina Jehan Jamil (Title)

FOLIO TEXT: MINIATURE PAINTING AT THE NCA
by DR. MARCELLA C. SIRHANDI

In the Mughal period, emperors Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir established and maintained royal painting ateliers in Lahore. This city earned a reputation as one of the centers for the production of miniature painting. Pahari painting thrived around the same time in the nearby Punjab Hills and when Ranjit Singh captured Lahore and made it his capital in 1799 many artists came there to offer their services.

Though miniature painting suffered irreparably during the colonial period--particularly royal courts of the north after the British conquered the Punjab--the art did not completely die out. Enlightened rulers such as those at the courts of Alwar and Patiala supported painters in the decades before Independence. Unfortunately, the British had so effectively denigrated traditional Indian painting, that even educated, enlightened Indians preferred Western oil painting to Indian miniatures.

After Independence miniature painting witnessed a revival in Lahore with the arrival of Haji Sharif. His grandfather, Ustad Allah Ditta, founded an atelier at the princely court of Patiala in the years before Partition. Both Allah Ditta and his son, Basharat Ullah, were accomplished in Provincial Mughal style and technique, but they also painted in a modified Punjab Hills style. (Their work can be seen at the Pakistan National Council of Arts, Islamabad.) Because his father died when he was a child, Haji Sharif had several teachers who practiced different *kalams* (styles). As fine and delicate as Haji Sharif's paintings are, there is little doubt that some of the original miniature technique was lost before Haji's grandfather took up his brush.

Haji Sharif taught miniature painting at the Mayo School of Arts (now the The National College of Arts) from 1947 to 1968 (or 1945-1966?). When he retired due to poor eyesight, Sheikh Shujaullah filled his place. Shujaullah belonged to a family of artists who migrated from Persia to India with Mir Saeed Ali and Sheikh Abdus Samad--calligrapher and painter emperor Humayun brought with him on his return to Delhi. Members of the family settled in various provinces throughout north India and in 1908 Shujaullah was born in Alwar. Shujaullah's grandfather, Rahimullah, was a calligrapher and a *naqash*i. From his father, Shujaullah learned border designing and calligraphy, from his uncle he learned painting.

The family migrated to Lahore in 1947 at a time when Shujaullah was enjoying well-earned respect in his field. He was accomplished in Persian as well as Mughal and Pahari *kalams*. Shujuallah joined Mayo College of Arts after teaching for three years at Punjab University art department. His death in Lahore in 1980 marked the end of the tradition of family-transmitted skills in miniature painting. Bashir Ahmed, Shujaullah's most talented and serious student was chosen as his successor and the blossoming of miniature painting in Pakistan through future programs of the National College of Arts was set in motion.

Born in Lahore to a family of professional educators, Bashir Ahmed appreciated the importance of education and learned the most effective teaching methodology by observing his family practicing their craft. Bashir joined the National College of Arts in 1970 and graduated in 1973-74. After graduation Bashir started an eight year apprenticeship with Shekih Shujaullah to learn the art of miniature painting. He also went to Mohammad Haji Sharif's studio and "put himself at his door" (to humbly offer his services; to watch & observe the *ustad*). He learned in the traditional method, as it survived from Mughal through the colonial period.

In 1976 Bashir joined the NCA as lecturer and taught miniature painting along with Shujaullah. After Shujaullah died, Bashir took his place and lobbied for a major in miniature painting, which up to that time had only been a course within the fine arts department. Two students enrolled in the new miniature painting major in 1982. The program grew slowly--miniature painting was still suspect as a viable modern art form in the 1980s. Bashir assigned problems to his students in which contemporary ideas and themes were to be painted in traditional Mughal, Persian and Punjab Hill's style and technique. In his own work, Bashir had already expanded the parameters of miniature painting when he worked with and under the influence of Zahoor ul Aklaq.

To date, more than fifty students have graduated from the NCA with a major in miniature painting. The genre is no longer regarded merely a "craft" as the British decreed two hundred years ago--it is a popular, modern/modernized art form with as many possibilities as the imagination can conjure. Based upon technique, neo-miniature painting demands skill as well as creativity. Our attraction to traditional miniature painting is the precision of technique, the attention to detail and the meaning of content--the same is true of neo-miniature painting, but the parameters have expanded. It is for the current and future art historians, collectors and miniature painting practioniers of Pakistan to determine and define the parameters of this still emerging art form.

Bashir and his students have taken this art form around the world. This folio of reproductions tracing the evolution of miniature painting at the NCA represents an important contribution to the college and the larger community as well. It includes work by the *ustads*, Mohammad Haji Sharif, Sheikh Shujaullah and Bashir Ahmed and that of younger artists and future stars.

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al Musawar Printers, Nisbet Road, Lahore.